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REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council
or brought to its attention

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report contains resolutions and decisions adopted at the recent sessions of the regional commissions that call for action by the Economic and Social Council or are to be brought to its attention. The report covers the period between the Council's substantive sessions of 1995 and 1996. During the first half of 1996, four of the five regional commissions held their regular sessions: the Economic Commission for Europe held its fifty-first session in Geneva from 15 to 23 April; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held its fifty-second session in Bangkok from 17 to 24 April; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held its twenty-sixth session in San José, Costa Rica, from 15 to 20 April; and the Economic Commission for Africa held the thirty-first session of the Commission and the twenty-second meeting of the Conference of Ministers in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May, and the 17th meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole from 30 April to 3 May. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which holds its sessions on a biennial basis, did not meet in 1996.

* E/1996/100.

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I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COUNCIL

A. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. At its fifty-second session, the Commission approved the following draft resolutions for action by the Council:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Amendment of the terms of reference of the Commission

Change of name of Hong Kong in paragraphs 2 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Council.

Noting that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has recommended that the name "Hong Kong" in paragraphs 2 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission be changed to "Hong Kong, China", effective as from 1 July 1997, with the objective of enabling Hong Kong to continue thereafter as an associate member of the Commission,

Decides to amend paragraphs 2 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Admission of Palau as a full member of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council.

Noting that Palau has become a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in accordance with paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission,

Decides to amend paragraphs 3 and 4 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

DRAFT RESOLUTION III

Admission of Turkey as a member of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council.

Noting that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has recommended the admission of Turkey as a member within the geographical scope of the Commission,

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Decides to amend paragraphs 2 and 3 of the terms of reference of the Commission accordingly.

B. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

2. At its twenty-sixth session, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean received an invitation from the Government of Aruba to hold its twenty-seventh session in Oranjestad, Aruba, in 1998. On 20 April 1996, the Commission adopted resolution 562 (XXVI), in which it accepted that invitation and recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it approve the holding of the twenty-seventh session of the Commission in Aruba in 1998.

C. Economic Commission for Africa

3. At the thirty-first session of the Commission/twenty-second meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning, held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 1996, the Conference of Ministers adopted the following draft resolution for action by the Council:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

New directions for the Economic Commission for Africa

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the terms of reference of the Commission as adopted by the Council in its resolution 671 A (XXV) of 29 April 1958 and amended by the Council in its resolutions 974 D.I (XXXVI) of 5 July 1963, 1343 (XLV) of 18 July 1968 and 1978/68 of 4 August 1978,

Recalling further the various resolutions that have implications for the mandate and operations of the Commission, in particular General Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, 33/202 of 29 January 1979 and 44/211 of 21 December 1989,

Noting with appreciation the endorsement by the Council of Commission resolution 718 (XXVI) of 12 May 1991 on the revitalization of the mandate and operational framework of the regional commission for Africa, as well as Commission resolutions 726 (XXVII) of 22 April 1992 on strengthening the Economic Commission for Africa to face Africa's development challenges in the 1990s and 779 (XXIX) of 4 May 1994 on strengthening the operational capacity of the Economic Commission for Africa,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 45/177 of 19 December 1990, 45/264 of 13 May 1991 and 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, under which the regional commissions should be enabled fully to play their role under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council,

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and those located in developing countries strengthened in the context of the overall objectives of the ongoing restructuring and revitalization process,

Having examined in depth the document entitled "Serving Africa better: strategic directions for the Economic Commission for Africa" 1/ and the proposed Medium-term Plan for the period 1998-2001, 2/

1. Expresses its appreciation for the process of reform and renewal of the Commission initiated by the Executive Secretary;

2. Endorses the new orientations of the Commission, as outlined in the above-mentioned document; 1/

3. Endorses further the proposed Medium-term Plan for the period 1998-2001, 2/ bearing in mind that in its implementation due emphasis will be given to the need for greater selectivity and impact;

4. Encourages the Executive Secretary to continue to strengthen the process of renewal and reform of the Commission in consultation with member States;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary, in close collaboration with the Bureau of the Commission, to revise the 1996-1997 work programme, which has become necessary to reflect the new orientation of the Commission's work and to ensure a smooth transition in 1997 to the next Medium-term Plan. The revision must be within resources already approved for the Economic Commission for Africa by the General Assembly, and must pay due regard to the efficiency measures required to implement the relevant decisions of the General Assembly regarding the 1996-1997 budget;

6. Appeals to the Secretary-General to request the General Assembly to consider the revised work programme in conjunction with its review of the Medium-term Plan 1998-2001.

II. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

A. Economic Commission for Europe

Decision A (51). The work of the Commission and its future activities

4. The Commission noted the interim report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Strategic Directions and Efficiency set up by its special session in September 1995 and urged ECE member Governments to respond promptly to the questionnaire prepared by the Ad Hoc Working Group seeking their views on the review process of ECE activities. The Commission invited the Executive

1/ E/ECA/CM.22/2.

2/ E/ECA/CM.22/3.

Secretary to finalize the preparations for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Economic Commission for Europe in April 1997, including the elaboration of a declaration on strengthening of economic cooperation in Europe.

5. The Commission approved its programme of work for 1996-1997 and endorsed, in principle, subject to review at its fifty-second session, its programme of work for 1996-2000. It called upon the principal subsidiary bodies to take into account the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, where appropriate, in defining and implementing their work programmes. The Commission invited the Executive Secretary to examine carefully the implications of the financial crisis of the United Nations for both professional and general service posts within ECE, and decided to suspend the activities of the Committee on Agriculture and to retain only ECE work on standardization of perishable produce and on agricultural statistics.

Decision B (51). Participation of the business community in the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe

6. The Commission invited member States and requested the Executive Secretary to encourage, to the greatest extent practicable, business community participation in execution of the ECE mandate through developing its closer cooperation with relevant PSBs and trust funds. It also requested the Executive Secretary to explore, in consultations with the Governments of the member States and representatives of the business community, the feasibility of a more consistent framework of cooperation with the business community, with particular attention to the interests of the emerging private sector in the countries in transition. It decided to consider the conclusions of the round-table conference on sustainable industrial development held during its fifty-first session.

7. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to study possible mechanisms for enhancing NGO and business community involvement in ECE activities, with due regard to similar arrangements already in place with the Economic and Social Council, UNCTAD and other relevant United Nations bodies, and to make proposals for its further development, to be presented to the Commission's fifty-second session.

Decision C (51). Diversification of forms and methods of the Commission's activities designed to assist countries of the region in transition to a market economy and their integration with the European and global economies

8. Mindful of the valuable role of ECE in assisting countries in transition, in particular through the programme of workshops, seminars, providing expertise and consultative services and other similar activities, the Commission confirmed the importance of continuing the programme of workshops and seminars on subjects of practical importance to the countries in transition in the ECE region. It supported the Executive Secretary's efforts to cooperate with the Joint Vienna

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Institute, the European Training Foundation, the ILO/Turin Centre and other institutions in providing management training for the countries in transition, and invited him to consult United Nations programmes and funds and the international financial institutions on their possible contribution to the ECE activities of special interest to the countries in transition.

9. The Commission again asked the Executive Secretary to request the Secretary-General to allocate adequate resources within the existing United Nations regular budget for implementation of the Regional Advisory Services Programme, and reiterated its recommendation to the Secretary-General to consider the possibility of using ECE as a focal point of facilitating within the framework of the appropriate arrangements to be made within the United Nations Secretariat the promotion and enhancing of mutual cooperation with United Nations global programmes, organs and specialized agencies and within their respective mandates.

Decision D (51). Strengthening of cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe

10. The Commission considered that cooperation between the secretariats of the two organizations to promote the implementation of the pertinent conclusions of OSCE meetings could be strengthened, within existing resources, along the following lines: by continuation of regular consultations at the level of the Executive Secretary of ECE and the Secretary-General of OSCE on matters of implementation of economic dimension commitments contained in OSCE documents, in particular to the preparation and the follow-up of the meetings of the OSCE Economic Forum; by cooperation in the organization of workshops and seminars identified by the Economic Forum on economic dimension subjects including investment promotion and investment regimes in the countries in transition; and by ECE elaborating early-warning indicators of the economic situation through provision of timely and topical statistics and economic analysis, while taking into account the work being done by other international organizations in this field, thus enabling OSCE to detect risks of tension which could endanger stability and security in the region.

11. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to consult the OSCE Secretary-General on further strengthening the cooperation between ECE and OSCE in the implementation of the pertinent provisions of CSCE/OSCE documents relating to the strengthening of economic cooperation in the region, assistance to the countries in transition and economic security in the region.

Decision E (51). Economic cooperation in the Mediterranean

12. The Commission noted with satisfaction the recognition given by OSCE at the Budapest Summit of December 1994 to the role played by ECE and other relevant international organizations and institutions in support of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean as an important factor for stability in the OSCE region, and called upon Mediterranean countries to work closely with the

ECE and OSCE to intensify the dialogue with the Mediterranean partners for cooperation through seminars and to intensify their common links by the implementation of specific projects for the Mediterranean region, inviting the Executive Secretary to cooperate with the informal open-ended contact group, the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, pursuant to the decision on the Mediterranean adopted at the Budapest Summit 1994. It called upon ECE to cooperate with OSCE in the organization of workshops and seminars identified by OSCE on economic cooperation subjects that are devoted to Mediterranean questions with the Mediterranean partners for cooperation.

13. The Commission called upon member States to assist the Commission in its current activities on the analysis of macroeconomic and sectoral policies with a view to taking into account the Mediterranean dimension of ECE. It requested the Executive Secretary to continue to cooperate with the Executive Secretaries of the other regional commissions concerned, as well as heads of other relevant United Nations bodies, in order to secure interaction with Mediterranean partners for cooperation, to increase interregional cooperation on the subjects within the competence of ECE and which are of common interest to the Mediterranean countries. It welcomed the adoption of the Declaration by the Mediterranean countries and the European Union at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona of November 1995, and invited the Executive Secretary to explore the possibility of EU funding, envisaged in the Economic and Financial Partnership dimension of the Work Plan of the Barcelona Conference, to develop and to assist in the implementation of projects in areas such as trade facilitation, environment, transport, statistics and energy which are supported by the Mediterranean countries.

Decision F (51). Cooperation in the field of environment and sustainable development

14. The Commission welcomed the outcome of the Third Ministerial Conference on the theme "Environment for Europe" (Sofia, Bulgaria, October 1995) and its acknowledgement of the important role of ECE in overseeing the Environment for Europe process in close cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies. Calling upon all its subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, to contribute to the implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe, the Commission endorsed the establishment of the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials with the aim of streamlining the Environment for Europe process and preparation of the 1998 Ministerial Conference in Denmark, and equally endorsed the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the Preparation of a draft Convention on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making.

15. The Commission expressed its satisfaction with conduct of the first National Environmental Performance Review and called again upon all ECE member States and the European Union to ratify, if they had not already done so, the ECE conventions in the field of protection of the environment.

Decision G (51). Cooperation in the field of transport

16. Underlining the need for ECE to contribute to the implementation of harmonized and coordinated transport policy concepts for the region, in close cooperation with the European Union, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, subregional groupings and governmental as well as non-governmental organizations, the Commission welcomed the action being taken as follow-up of the second Pan-European Transport Conference and the constructive participation of the ECE secretariat in the preparation of the third conference scheduled for June 1997.

17. The Commission decided to hold the Regional Conference on Transport and Environment in Vienna in November 1997. The Preparatory Committee was encouraged to continue its work on the basis of draft guidelines for a common strategy on transport and the environment and to propose draft final documents for adoption by the Conference.

18. The Commission called upon all Contracting Parties to the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets to participate actively in its revision process, and welcomed the completion of the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance. It urged member States to determine the legal form of the regulations on combined transport on inland waterways, possibly including coastal shipping, and endorsed the establishment of the International Working Group for the Elaboration of a Draft European Agreement for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways.

19. The Commission welcomed the results achieved in the implementation of the road and rail infrastructure projects and other activities aimed at intensifying assistance to countries in transition, while calling on the secretariat to ensure close cooperation with the European Union, international organizations and institutions also providing assistance to these countries in order to achieve better coordination and to avoid duplication of efforts.

Decision H (51). Cooperation in the field of energy

20. Underlining the importance of energy-related issues in regional cooperation, in particular as regards assistance to countries in transition, the Commission stressed the need to mobilize the support of the private sector to assist countries in transition through extrabudgetary activities, and to cooperate and collaborate with other regional institutions, subregional groupings and non-governmental organizations active in the sphere of energy within the ECE region with a view to ensuring best use of available resources and complementarities.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Resolution 52/1. Preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission

21. Recalling its resolution 48/2 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission, in particular its decision to review the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic priorities and its subsidiary structure, no later than at the fifty-third session of the Commission, the Commission acknowledged the need for a comprehensive and thorough preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission. It welcomed the preparations initiated by the Executive Secretary to facilitate the comprehensive review by the Commission of its conference structure and requested the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission to undertake an independent review of the conference structure of the Commission. It also requested the Executive Secretary to consult the Advisory Committee, as appropriate, in undertaking the preparatory exercise, and to convene a regional preparatory meeting in Bangkok before February 1997 to discuss, among other things, the outcome of the secretariat's preparatory exercise and the Advisory Committee's recommendations, in preparation for the review of the conference structure of the Commission, and to submit its report to the Commission at its fifty-third session.

Resolution 52/2. Shanghai Symposium to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

22. The Commission, noting that the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Shanghai would fall in 1997, and noting also the generous offer of the Government of China to host a three-day symposium in Shanghai on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of ESCAP, decided to hold a symposium on the theme "Development challenges and opportunities for Asia and the Pacific in the twenty-first century and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific". It urged all members and associate members to extend full cooperation in the preparations for and active participation in the symposium, and requested the Executive Secretary to cooperate closely with the Government of China in the organization of the symposium.

Resolution 52/3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

23. The Commission welcomed the successful outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Cognizant of General Assembly resolution 50/203 of 22 December 1995 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 3/ and other relevant General

3/ A/CONF.177/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

Assembly resolutions, the Commission urged all members and associate members to ensure full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in coordination with the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific, and called upon all donor countries, local and national governments, the private sector, funding agencies, and regional and international financial institutions to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed, land-locked and island developing economies and the disadvantaged economies in transition, in such implementation. It requested the Executive Secretary to take the necessary steps to support implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action in coordination with the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Resolution 52/4. Promoting human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific

24. The Commission welcomed the offer of the Government of China to host a regional meeting of senior officials in 1996 to consider the means of launching the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond in Asia and the Pacific. 4/ It called upon member and associate member Governments to promote human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific by integrating the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond into their youth policies, plans and programmes; urged donor Governments and agencies to provide technical and financial resources in support of the regional implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth; and invited concerned non-governmental organizations and private enterprises to collaborate with Governments, as well as with the Commission, in promoting human resources development among youth in Asia and the Pacific. It requested the secretariat to convene a regional meeting of senior officials in 1996, within available resources, to consider the means of promoting human resources development among youth through the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth in Asia and the Pacific and to assist members and associate members, among others, through designing their national policy frameworks and contributing to the implementation of those policy frameworks. It also requested the secretariat to provide support to national efforts through the preparation of a comprehensive survey of the youth situation and human resources development policies, plans and programmes for youth in Asia and the Pacific, and advisory services, and to conduct a series of training courses directed at youth work personnel.

4/ General Assembly resolution 50/81, annex.

Resolution 52/5. Regional cooperation in response to the spread and consequences of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in the Asia and the Pacific region

25. The Commission expressed concern over the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic in Asia and the Pacific. Convinced that the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Asia and the Pacific must be addressed at the regional level because of the need to develop a comprehensive and coordinated regional prevention strategy to counter the widespread transmission of the virus across national borders, the Commission urged all members and associate members of the Commission to accord high priority to the development and implementation of effective policies, programmes and strategies for the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, with emphasis on community-based action and cross-border collaboration between and among those countries whose border areas are particularly affected. It requested the secretariat to undertake further initiatives, subject to availability of resources and in collaboration with the United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS and other concerned United Nations bodies and agencies and subregional intergovernmental organizations, to promote regional cooperation to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution and on proposed follow-up measures.

Resolution 52/6. Promotion of environmentally sound and healthy cities

26. The Commission recognized the importance of the Regional Action Plan on Urbanization adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific in November 1993, and the Declaration on Healthy Cities in Asia and the Pacific adopted by the Regional Seminar on the Promotion of Environmentally Sound and Healthy Cities in January 1996. It urged members and associate members to accord high priority in promoting environmentally sound and healthy cities in their overall socio-economic development, and to allocate adequate resources for this purpose; requested United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other organizations involved in this area to intensify their efforts towards environmentally sound and healthy cities; and requested all concerned donor countries, donor agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide financial and technical support for the promotion of environmentally sound and healthy cities in Asia and the Pacific.

Resolution 52/7. Transfer of environmentally sound technology

27. The Commission recognized that the availability of scientific and technological information and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology were essential requirements for sustainable development in the Asia

and the Pacific region. Recalling chapter 34 of Agenda 21 5/ on the transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building, and chapter 38 of Agenda 21 on international institutional arrangements, in particular the role of the regional commissions in regional and subregional cooperation and implementation, the Commission requested the secretariat to prepare an itemized progress report on concrete measures taken by members and associate members with respect to their commitments undertaken pursuant to chapter 34 of Agenda 21, and to make available to them an inventory of environmentally sound technologies appropriate to selected industrial sectors in the Asia and the Pacific region, including relevant information on the elaboration of the terms under which such transfers could take place. It also requested the secretariat to submit documents on the above to the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development at its fifth session, to be held in 1998; continue to provide advice to improve the operational modalities for effective transfer of such technology to the developing countries; and promote the development of endogenous technological capacities and requisite technology in the developing countries of the Asia and the Pacific region. It invited contributions from the financial and technical resources from donor countries, relevant agencies and other possible sources, and requested the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to review on a regular basis the implementation of the present resolution.

Resolution 52/8. Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

28. The Commission, noting the successful organization of the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in November 1995, endorsed the recommendations of the Conference, including the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 1996-2000, and called for their early implementation, including the decision to make efforts for establishing a regional funding mechanism when necessary. It requested all members and associate members to participate actively in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference, urged all United Nations bodies and agencies concerned, multilateral financial institutions, donor countries and agencies to contribute technical and financial resources for implementing the recommendations of the Conference, and called upon the members of the Inter-agency Subcommittee on Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific to play an effective role in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme as coordinators of areas identified by the Subcommittee. The Commission requested the secretariat to mobilize both human and financial resources to ensure effective coordination and joint pursuit of the activities of all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, in the implementation, facilitation and

5/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

monitoring of the recommendations of the Conference, and to include an item on mid-term review and assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference in the agenda of the fourth session of the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Resolution 52/9. Intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges

29. The Commission, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee on Transport and Communications at its second session, in November 1995, and of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its fifth session, in April 1996, that the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development Project (ALTID), comprising the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway projects, as well as land transport facilitation, should constitute a priority activity in the New Delhi Action Plan and in the secretariat's programme of work, urged members and associate members to lend full support and cooperation to the secretariat in implementing activities under the ALTID project, and to seek ways and means of constructing the missing highway and railway links and of upgrading and/or extending existing links, as well as constructing new links which have been identified as part of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, and to consider the possibility of acceding to the international conventions as well as related international transit conventions. It requested the secretariat to undertake a number of supportive activities and coordinate the implementation of ALTID project effectively with the Economic Commission for Europe to ensure eventual compatibility of standards and requirements of land-transport networks of international importance in Asia and Europe, as well as with other international agencies and organizations, in order to avoid duplication of work, and to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session and biennially thereafter on progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

Resolution 52/10. Revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment

30. The Commission, acknowledging the revision to the Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment, as approved by the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its seventh meeting in Ulaanbaatar and endorsed by the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its fifth session, endorsed the revised Action Programme for Regional Economic Cooperation in Trade and Investment and called upon the secretariat to pay due attention, subject to the availability of resources, to its activities, encouraging all members and associate members to support and participate actively in the implementation of the revised Action Programme. The Commission invited the United Nations Development Programme, the Asian Development Bank and other interested bilateral and multilateral donors to collaborate actively with the secretariat in its efforts to implement the revised Action Programme.

Resolution 52/11. Strengthening of subregional economic cooperation among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization

31. The Commission welcomed the initiative taken by the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation at its seventh and eighth meetings to give special attention to the North-East Asian subregion with a view to promoting and strengthening the structures facilitating cooperation in that subregion. It noted that there was among south-western member countries of ESCAP, including the Economic Cooperation Organization member countries, great potential for sustainable development, even though several of them are landlocked and some of them have economies that are in transition to the market system. Convinced that many of the difficulties faced by countries that are landlocked and in transition to the market system can be overcome through the strengthening of cooperation, the Commission called upon members and associate members to support efforts to promote subregional economic cooperation, and invited the Steering Group of the Committee for Regional Economic Cooperation to focus, in some of its future meetings, on promoting economic and technical cooperation in trade, investment, and transport and communications among the south-western member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, including the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization. The Commission called upon the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session on progress in the implementation of the present resolution.

Other decisions adopted by ESCAP at its fifty-second session

32. The Commission welcomed the establishment of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific as a subsidiary body of the Commission, and noted the contents of the report submitted by the Governing Board of the Institute, which had held its first session in March 1996. The Commission also noted that the Governing Board had decided to establish a task force to evaluate and restructure the Institute's programme in accordance with the changing needs and priorities in the region. The Commission requested that the decisions of the Governing Board regarding the task force be implemented at the earliest possible date.

33. The Commission endorsed the draft medium-term plan, 1998-2001, as contained in document E/ESCAP/1031.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

34. At its twenty-sixth session, held from 15 to 20 April 1996, the Commission adopted three resolutions of particular interest to the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 552 (XXVI). Strengthening sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean

35. The Commission welcomed the main document presented by the secretariat, entitled "Strengthening development: the interplay of macro- and microeconomics", and considered it of great importance to guide the required Governments' measures to strengthen development. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of attending the productive modernization of small and medium-size enterprises and its financing, and identified priority issues that warrant further research on the part of the secretariat, paying particular attention to the special situation and needs of smaller economies.

Resolution 553 (XXVI). Reform of the United Nations and its impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

36. The Commission stressed that ECLAC is especially well endowed to undertake, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the activities entrusted to it by the Economic and Social Council in the framework of a restructured United Nations. The Commission reiterated ECLAC's mission to function as a centre of excellence, collaborating with Governments in the integral analysis of development processes geared to the formulation, follow-up and evaluation of public policies, together with the provision of operative services in the fields of specialized information, advice, training and support for regional cooperation. The Commission proposed measures to improve ECLAC's performance, impact, efficiency and effectiveness, and established a special intergovernmental open committee, with the mandate to set up the priorities in the Working Programme 1998-1999 and propose guidelines on future activities and budgetary matters. The group will also prepare a progress report which will be presented for the consideration of the Council at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

Resolution 561 (XXVI). Admission of Anguilla as associate member of ECLAC

37. The Commission approved the admission of Anguilla as an associate member of the Commission.

Other resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session

38. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted resolutions on support for the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (resolution 554 (XXVI)), and of the Latin American Demographic Centre (resolution 555 (XXVI)). It also approved the work programme for the period 1998-1999 (resolution 559 (XXVI)), the calendar of conferences for the period 1996-1998 (resolution 557 (XXVI)), and the Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean 1995-2001 (resolution 558 XXVI)).

D. Economic Commission for Africa

39. The Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning also adopted the resolutions and decisions summarized below.

Resolution 810 (XXXI). Strengthening of the multinational programming and operational centres

40. The Conference took note of the new strategic vision of the Commission as outlined in the document entitled "Serving Africa better: strategic directions of the Economic Commission for Africa" ¹/ as well as its resolution 702 (XXV) of 19 May 1990 on the transformation and strengthening of the centres to enable them to play an effective role as catalysts for subregional economic integration. It requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to take necessary steps to strengthen the centres to ensure that they play their role more efficiently as centres of excellence.

Resolution 811 (XXXI). The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

41. As a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, the annex of which contains the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in the 1990s, and the Cairo Agenda for Action: Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development, and having examined in-depth the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the Conference considered the report entitled "United Nations System-wide Initiative on Africa". The Conference adopted the report and noted with satisfaction that the priorities of the Special Initiative were in consonance with those enunciated in the Cairo Agenda for Action and UN-NADAF. It further noted that the Initiative represented a set of concrete and coordinated actions aimed at maximizing support for Africa's development within the framework of UN-NADAF. It endorsed the Initiative and called upon the international community, particularly the United Nations system, to extend effective support to African countries to enable them to fully realize the objectives and targets of the Initiative. It requested the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to coordinate the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the priorities and activities of the Initiative and UN-NADAF and submit such report regularly to the Conference of Ministers.

Resolution 812 (XXXI). Implementation of the African Information Society Initiative

42. As a follow-up to resolution 795 (XXX) of 3 May 1995 on building Africa's information highway, the Conference considered the report entitled "Exploiting information technology to accelerate socio-economic development in Africa: an action plan". It adopted the plan of action proposed in the report and called upon the Economic Commission for Africa, in consultation with member States, along with the major international organizations and bilateral partners, to

incorporate the objectives of the African Information Society and to consider utilizing it as a guiding framework.

Resolution 813 (XXXI). Amendment to resolution 757 (XXVIII) on the restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission related to the Conference of African Ministers responsible for sustainable development and environment

43. The Conference took note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the Commission on the consultations between the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the secretariats of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Environment Programme with the Economic Commission for Africa concerning the scope of activities of AMCEN and the Conference of African Ministers responsible for sustainable development and environment.

44. The Conference endorsed the proposal to reconsider its resolution 757 (XXVIII) of 4 May 1993, entitled "Restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission", in which it had suppressed the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. The Conference introduced amendments to the last paragraph of section B.2 to rectify the error in the suppression of AMCEN, so that the paragraph now reads: "This Conference assumes the functions of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, which is hereby abolished". It also requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to make recommendations to the regular session of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning in 1995 for a final decision on the status of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for sustainable development and environment vis-à-vis the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

Resolution 814 (XXXI). Implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1993-2002)

45. The Conference, in reaffirming the primary responsibilities of African countries in the implementation of the second Industrial Development Decade programme, called upon the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity to continue to undertake concrete follow-up actions for the promotion of the Decade programme. It appealed to member States to take measures to enhance the full implementation of the programme; it also appealed to international development partners to consider favourably the allocation of substantial resources for the implementation of the programme.

Resolution 815 (XXXI). Mobilization of resources for
industrialization in Africa

46. The Conference recalled General Assembly resolution 47/177 of 22 December 1992, in which the Assembly adopted the programme for the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa; resolution GC5/Res.20 and the Yaoundé Declaration adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization at its fifth session, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the second Ministerial Symposium on Industrialization of Least Developed Countries; and resolution 2 (XI) adopted at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry on the development of the private sector for the accelerated implementation of the programme for the second Decade and beyond. It took note of document CAMI.12/8/ICE/1995/8, entitled "Mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa", and of document CAMI.12/9/ICE/1995/9, entitled "Development of human resources for industrialization in Africa". The Conference called upon member States to create and maintain an enabling environment for private-sector development and the growth of private capital inflows as well as to provide improved infrastructural and human resources capacities.

47. The Conference requested international organizations, including the World Bank and regional organizations, to continue to support African countries with the technical and financial assistance for the development of the private sector and promotion of private investment. It called upon African member States and regional/subregional organizations to pay particular attention to the development of industrial skills and technological and entrepreneurial capabilities in national human resources development programmes, and to ensure that adequate resources are provided in national budgets as well as support from multilateral and bilateral funding agencies in this regard. The Conference also called upon the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other international organizations to continue to help African countries in their research/development and training activities by providing technical and financial assistance to subregional and regional institutions. It also requested the secretariats of the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Organization of African Unity to take necessary measures for establishing an information network on African industrial training institutions. It also urged the member States to institute initiatives that will curb Africa's brain drain and to use and manage national skills rationally, and increase the participation of women in industrial development. The Conference also requested the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to undertake follow-up actions for the mobilization of resources at national, subregional and regional levels for industrialization in Africa, and to jointly submit a biennial report on the matter to the Conference of African Ministers of Industry.

Resolution 816 (XXXI). Enhancement of women's contribution to the implementation of the programme of the second United Nations Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1993-2002)

48. Recognizing the strategic role that women can play in the achievement of the Decade objectives, the Conference called upon African countries to enhance the involvement of women in the development of Africa, including the private sector and in particular industrial activities. It also called upon international organizations to provide support for the promotion of women's participation in industrial activities.

Resolution 817 (XXXI). African Regional Conference on Science and Technology

49. The Conference noted the importance of science and technology in stimulating economic growth in African countries. In this regard, the Conference urged member States to renew science and technology policies and machinery and translate these into appropriate legislation for their effective application; put in place incentives to foster progress in science and technological innovation; and create a strong governmental machinery for designing and managing imported technology and for the effective utilization of such imported technology. It further urged member States to put in place an enabling environment for capacity-building for effectively utilizing international technologies, and to take steps to implement the protocol on science and technology of the African Economic Community. It called upon the organizations of the United Nations system to intensify their assistance to African countries and organizations in promoting the development of science and technology in the continent.

Resolution 818 (XXXI). Promotion of mineral resources development and utilization in Africa

50. The Conference recognized the poor state of development of the African minerals-processing industries, the need to strengthen African countries' capabilities and capacity to develop fully their mineral resources, and the important role of the private sector in this regard. It requested the Economic Commission for Africa to carry out studies on selected minerals with a view to providing information and data for policy formulation and strategy development. It also recommended that African countries should enhance the cooperation and integration in mineral resources development.

Resolution 819 (XXXI). Promotion of energy resources development and utilization in Africa

51. Recognizing the importance of energy development in the achievement of sustainable economic development and poverty alleviation, the Conference urged

member States to formulate policies and strategies that would enhance greater contribution of energy to socio-economic development. It further urged African States to establish appropriate legal, fiscal and financial incentives, including physical infrastructure to facilitate access to energy, including new and renewable sources of energy, particularly by low-income consumers to meet their energy needs. It also requested member States to initiate concrete actions by creating the necessary conducive and enabling environment for the optimal operation of the energy sector. It further urged African countries to strengthen cooperation and integration through the exchange of information and experiences. In this regard, it called upon the Economic Commission for Africa and other African organizations to establish energy networks for the exchange of information on development and utilization of energy resources in general and new and renewable sources of energy resources in particular.

Resolution 820 (XXXI). Organization of a meeting on economic cooperation among developing countries/technical cooperation among developing countries

52. The importance of South-South cooperation to the development of the region, in particular its contribution to production and trade was underscored. In this respect, the Conference welcomed the proposal to organize a meeting bringing together United Nations regional commissions and relevant specialized agencies, financial institutions and other development partners. It also requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to proceed with the arrangements for the conference, and called upon member States to participate fully in the proposed conference.

Resolution 821 (XXXI). Eight-year intra-African trade development action plan

53. As a follow-up to the extraordinary session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade, which met in December 1990 and adopted the Strategies for the Revitalization and Growth of Africa's Trade in the 1990s and Beyond, the Conference endorsed the Plan of Action for the Development of Intra-African Trade as proposed by the Economic Commission for Africa. The Conference urged member States to support fully and implement the eight-year Plan of Action for the Development of Intra-African Trade. It called upon regional and international organizations to cooperate and coordinate efforts in the implementation of the Plan of Action; and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies to support the Plan of Action and provide resources for the funding of related programmes.

Resolution 822 (XXXI). Implementation of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community: strengthening regional economic communities; rationalization and harmonization of the activities of regional and subregional communities

54. Considering the entry into force on 12 May 1994 of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community ^{6/} and the role of the regional and subregional economic communities in the implementation of the provision of the Abuja Treaty, the Commission recommended the strengthening of the economic communities, including the rationalization and harmonization of their activities for enhanced impact. It urged member States that have not ratified the Abuja Treaty to do so, and requested member States, regional and subregional communities to institute a programme for the rationalization and harmonization of sectoral integration policies, including community trade policies through the unification of trade liberalization instruments. It also proposed the adoption of appropriate measures for enhancing the region's competitiveness in trade, promoting the participation of the private sector in the integration process and designing a self-financing mechanism for financing the integration process. It requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to assist in the implementation of the programme for the rationalization and design of the self-financing mechanism, for which it appealed to partners, including the United Nations Development Programme and funding agencies, to contribute to the financing activities on the implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

Resolution 823 (XXXI). Development of tourism in Africa

55. In view of the growing importance of tourism in socio-economic and cultural development, in particular the regional integration process, the Conference adopted a number of arrangements to facilitate the rationalization and effective utilization of tourism resources in Africa at the subregional and regional levels. It also proposed necessary follow-up mechanisms for the implementation of programmes related to arrangements at subregional and regional levels.

Resolution 824 (XXXI). Follow-up to Dakar and Beijing conferences: implementation of the global and regional platforms for the advancement of women

56. Recalling Commission resolution 802 (XXX) of 3 May 1995 concerning the African Platform for Action and the African Common Position for the Advancement of Women endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, the Conference urged African regional organizations to play a strong coordinating and catalytic role in the implementation of the global and regional platforms for action at the regional and subregional levels. It

^{6/} A/46/651, annex.

requested the Economic Commission for Africa to establish a data bank on national experiences on women. It also requested member States to mainstream gender in all sectors of national programmes, and to ensure that the gender dimension is integrated into the African Information Society Initiative to respond to the needs of both women and men appropriately and equitably.

Resolution 825 (XXXI). Decoration of the new United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa

57. Noting with satisfaction the completion of the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa and expressing its desire that the Centre's décor reflect the rich cultural heritage of Africa, the Conference appealed to member States to support the decoration project by contributing generously towards the decoration of the Centre.

Decision 1 (XXXI). Decision on the replacement of members of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning - Governing Council

58. The Conference of Ministers decided that effective 1 January 1997, the composition of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Planning and Development shall be as follows:

- (a) North African subregion: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco and Tunisia;
- (b) West African subregion: Guinea, Nigeria and Togo;
- (c) Central African subregion: Central African Republic, Congo and Rwanda;
- (d) Eastern and Southern African subregion: Ethiopia, Malawi and Swaziland.

Decision 2 (XXXI). Decision on sharpening the objectives and long-term goal of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development

59. The Conference of Ministers adopted the decision of the Board of Governors of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development at its meeting held in Niamey, the Niger, from 27 to 29 March 1996. It decided to refocus the medium-term objectives and long-term goal of the Centre's programme to make it better respond to the emerging socio-economic needs of member States. It also decided to establish a Scientific Advisory Committee of the Board of Governors with the responsibility of ensuring the relevance of programmes and products and continuous review of the objectives of the Centre in the light of emerging economic and scientific developments. It further decided on the composition, duration and membership of the Scientific Advisory Committee. The Conference also endorsed the decisions relating to the membership of the Board

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of Governors and the scale of contribution to the recurrent budget of the Centre. It also requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization and the Director-General of the Centre, to review the staff rules of the Centre.

Decision 3 (XXXI). Revitalization and strengthening of the
Africa Regional Coordinating Committee
for the Integration of Women

60. The Conference endorsed the modifications in the composition of the membership of the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women as decided in the meeting of ARCC, held in Addis Ababa, from 24 to 26 April 1996.
